Farmers' Champion

Successor to Indiahoma Champion

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Progressive Farming

This Department is devoted to those methods that are so wonderfully revolutionizing Agriculture

USING GREEN MANURE CROPS

Humus and Nitrogen, Essential Plant Foods, Must Be Supplied by Successful Wheat Grower.

If dry farming is to become a permanent system of agriculture it is absolutely essential that humus and nitrogen be put into the soil. There are many acres in the intermountain west where no other system of agriculture will ever prevail. The constant growing of wheat on summer fallowed land must cease, for such a system is sure to deplete the soil of its plant food. At the present, wheat farming methods largely consist of robbing the soil of its temporarily accumulated fertility and then letting it lie idle until such time as enough plant food has been made available and enough water has been stored to insure another good crop. Humus and nitrogen are very essential to successful wheat farming, and in order to secure these the dry farmer must make use of green manure crops that will supply these necessary plant foods. By doing this he is improving the soil texture as well as the water holding capacity, and in dry farming that is the greatest essential.

Beneficial effects from plowing under alfalfa previously grown in rows for seed production have been noticed on succeeding wheat crops for as long as ten years. At present alfalfa is conceded to be the best legume for the dry lands, its deep rooting system fitting it admirably to seek stored water at great depths. Deep rooted plants are decidedly preferable to shallow rooted ones, because they penetrate into the subsoil. In this way air and water find entrance, especially after the roots decay. It is supposed that alfalfa when plowed under enriches the surface soil with potash and phosphorus from the subsoil, thus bringing these substances within reach of the succeeding shallow-rooted crops.

The summer fallow simply prolongs the time when smaller crops and, consequently, smaller returns, must inevitably come from constant soil depletion. It is easier to keep a soil up to its fertility if soil building is started when the first crop is taken off than if it is prolonged until the farmer is forced to it, due to small returns.

Thus far alfalfa planted in rows, both seed and forage production, has proved more successful than the broadcast stand or closely drilled rows in regions where the moisture is not plentiful. While it will not probably resolve itself into a problem of seed production due to this lack of sufficient moisture for forage production, nevertheless it can be made a paying crop, both financially and as a soil improver.

ORCHARD GRASS IS VALUABLE

Crop Grows Well in Shade on Rich, Deep, Sandy Loam—Excellent for Permanent Pasture.

Orchard grass grows well in the shade, but it makes a larger growth when sown on rich sandy loam, deep and moist. On such soils it starts early in the spring and grows rapidly. Thus it makes a good grass for a permanent pasture, but when the ground is deep and rich it makes a more valuable hay, as its rapid growth enables one to cut two crops off the same land every year.

Orchard grass should be sown at the rate of two bushels, with 15 pounds of red clover seed per acre. Sow early in April. We like the plan of sowing the orchard grass and clover with oats. The oats are drilled two bushels to the acre, with 400 pounds of a standard bone phosphate to the acre. The orchard grass and clover is sown by hand or with the wheelbarrow just behind the drill, the seed being covered with the brush harrow. When the oats make a growth of two inches the field is rolled. When the oats are in bloom the crop is cut for green feed. Two bushels of land plaster is then sown to the acre and the field rolled to firm soil. By the latter part of July, if the season is favorable, about one to one and a half tons of good hay may be cut to the acre.

To grow heavy crops the field should be top dressed with rich, well-rotted manure every second year. Mr. G., who raises large quantities of it to cut green for his cows and to make into hay, dresses his field every second year with fermented liquid manure, and every third year with long horse manure. He raises very heavy crops by this system.

Orchard grass is one of the best grasses to grow for feeding on farms to cows or horses. When land is top dressed it will continue to yield heavy crops—usually two crops each season for several years—and it will then furnish a very thick sod to plow down for corn.

Combating Mites.

Kerosene emulsion, one of the best mixtures to use in combatting mites in the poultry house, is made by mixing two gallons of kerosene oil, one-half pound of whale oil soap, one quart of home-made soft soap, and one gallon water. Dissolve the soap by boiling in water, then remove from the fire and add the kerosene at once. Churn this mixture rapidly and violently until it is as smooth as beaten cream. One part of emulsion to several parts of water is used to dilute the mixture for application to buildings, dropping boards or nest boxes. Add one or two ounces of carbolic acid to the emulsion just before applying. This is a splendid disinfectant and insecticide to use about the poultry house.

BEST BUSHEL OF DRY WHEAT

Traction Engine Sweepstake Premium Won by Henry Holmes of Alta. —Gave Seed Away.

At the Seventh International Dry-Farming congress in October, the competition for the $2,500 traction engine sweepstake premium for the best bushel of hard wheat was most interesting, with 183 competing. The winner was Henry Holmes of Raymond, Alta., a hard working farmer who farms his own farm. He sold 400 bushels of his Marquis seed wheat for $4 a bushel and was offered $1,000 for the winning bushel, but declined to accept it, and distributed it gratis in small lots among the agriculturists, grain growers and government representatives.

Draft Is Harmful.

A chill from sleeping in a draft is a prolific source of loss of condition among the sows.

Introduction of New Plants.

But few farmers have any idea of the great work our government is doing in the way of introducing new plants and fruits from the old world into the United States. During the last fiscal year more than 2,000 seeds and plants were brought in. The department of agriculture has explorers constantly on the lookout for all kinds of plants and fruits that seem capable of good yields in our own country. They are picked up especially in Manchuria, Korea and China. There are specimens from wild apricot trees ten feet in diameter. There are wild grapes and wonderful persimmons and bush cherries and other curious and valuable specimens that most of us never dreamed of.

Water for Stock.

Water is cheap, but it is a necessity for sustaining the life of the stock.

Laying hens need plenty of pure water, for an egg is about 90 parts water.

Thumb Tacks in Heels.

Thumb tacks driven into the outside of the heel, where it is most likely to wear down, are the invention of a girl who was ten miles from a shoemaker. This would answer splendidly for the country, but there is danger of slipping on hardwood floors or the pavements.

RAISE BIGGER CROPS

Question of Scientific Soil Culture Attracts Inquiry.

Increase in Nebraska Yields Can Be Traced to Application of Principles and Persistent Discussion of Subject.

This is the day and age in the history of agriculture when the farmers of this country are seeking to know how to make practical application of those principles which have been shown by the best proof to get results and to make investigations for themselves that will enable them to make the most out of their opportunities, says the American Homestead.

One of the subjects that is attracting more than ordinary attention is the question of scientific soil culture. In the past crop rotation and drought resisting plants have been considered the main key to increased crops by the workers in most states until the past two or three years, but the splendid results being secured by careful scientific soil culture is causing a widespread inquiry into this subject.

In Nebraska, where this system has perhaps been more widely introduced than in almost any state in the union, the results are really astounding in their nature. According to the last report of the department of agriculture, Nebraska shows a gain in the average yield of wheat of 3.3 bushels, or an average of 19.1 bushels per acre for the last five years, from 1905 to 1909 inclusive. The average for the five years preceding was 15.8 bushels per acre. In the face of this fact Kansas showed an average yield of 14.6 bushels from 1900 to 1904, and 13.4 bushels per acre for the last five years, 1905 to 1909, or a net loss in the average of 1.2 bushels per acre. This means that with an average acreage of over six million per year, and based on the average farm price of 80 cents, as shown by the government reports, the farmers of Kansas lost a large amount of money they might otherwise have had. Had Kansas made the same average gain shown by Nebraska, her farmers would have received $112,000,000 more money during the five year period, from 1905 to 1909. Nebraska farmers, by increasing the average yield 3.3 bushels per acre, added about $33,000,000 to the wealth of the state during the same period.

From these figures it can be seen what it means to a state when it can, by a better system of farming, increase its average yields even a very small per cent., and what the future holds in store when these averages can be more than doubled by scientific soil culture.

The increase shown in Nebraska can no doubt be traced to the application, at least in part, of the principles of scientific soil culture and the persistent discussion of this subject throughout this state, which cannot be said of other states.

RAISING FIRST CLASS STOCK

Best of Draft Colts Are Reared by Farmers Who Keep Few Brood Mares to Do Their Farm Work.

It appears that the fact that good blood is necessary to produce high class draft horses is not appreciated by the majority of farmers. Location, climate, feeds and accidents and many other influences are blamed by unsuccessful draft horse breeders for the mediocrity of their colts, when in reality the trouble is more often pure stinginess. They won't pay the price for good stallion service. A few farmers waste poor colts by giving them poor care, but a great many more waste good care on colts of poor breeding. There are many farmers who have the ability and skill to handle high class drafters who are afraid to try. The man who takes pride in his farm work teams and why can keep them in good, vigorous condition ought to take his bank roll and acquire a few well bred mares an raise a few colts to sell every year. What good blood has done for others it will do for him. The very best draft colts are reared by farmers who keep a few well bred mares to do the work on their farms and depend upon the sale of young horses for a substantial increase to their bank account each year. If one makes good money in draft horse breeding he must have good blood.

Avoid Pig Losses.

A study of feed and conditions about the farrowing pens will help the thoughtful owner to avoid many losses when the pigs come.